

**Abstract****Electronic Access Control System and Method**

Disclosed is a new and flexible approach for managing physical security in an electronic lock-and-key system. The novel approach does away with cabling or other direct connecting between locks and a system management center. The (physical) keys serve to disseminate access control and other information within the system in a snowball-like way, using an adapted, but simple networking protocol. Whenever appropriate, cryptographic schemes are applied to protect the system.

09647234-092700